AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-14. (canceled)

Claim 15.   (New) An information retrieval method, comprising the steps of:

forming a general user model based on statistical data obtained by audience research on the actions of a plurality of users; said general user model having general user selection taste data; said statistical data including an audience rating for each of a plurality of genres, a plurality of life-scenes, and wherein each user is classified according to various characteristics including at least an age, a sex, and a life-stage;

inputting a user profile for a specific user;

forming an initial user model for said specific user based on said general user selection data and said user profile;

forming a study user model on the basis of said initial user model and an information selection history for said specific user;

retrieving information suiting said specific user based on said study user model by calculating a genre taste value based on a request time for an electronic program guide (EPG); said genre taste value being calculated using a life-scene/time function representing a relationship between the life-scene corresponding to the request time and a time-variable coefficient; and

rearranging and displaying the EPG based on a genre priority table formed using the retrieved information and the calculated genre taste value;

wherein said general user selection taste data is dispersed data, including time related data, that is interpolated into continuous data by an interpolation method specified by an interpolation control identification key.

Claim 16.   (New) The information retrieval method according to claim 15, wherein said interpolation method is a method of interpolating in accordance with a user attribute and/or a state of information utilization.

Claim 17.   (New) An information retrieval apparatus, comprising:

general user model forming means for forming a general user model based on statistical data obtained by audience research on the actions of a plurality of users; said general user model having general user selection taste data; said statistical data including an audience rating for each of a plurality of genres, a plurality of life-scenes, and wherein each user is classified according to various characteristics including at least an age, a sex, and life-scene;

input means for inputting a user profile for a specific user;

initial user model forming means for forming an initial user model for said specific user based on said general user selection data and said user profile;

study user model forming means for forming a study user model on the basis of said initial user model and an information selection history for said specific user;

retrieving means for retrieving information suiting said specific user based on said study user model by calculating a genre taste value based on a request time for an electronic program guide (EPG); said genre taste value being calculated using a life-

scene/time function representing a relationship between the life-scene corresponding to the request time and a time-variable coefficient; and

display means for rearranging and displaying the EPG based on a genre priority table formed using the retrieved information and the calculated genre taste value;

wherein said general user selection taste data is dispersed data, including time related data, that is interpolated into continuous data by an interpolation method specified by an interpolation control identification key.

Claim 18.   (New) The information retrieval apparatus according to claim 17, further comprising storing means for storing said general user selection taste data as the continuous data is converted into dispersed data.

Claim 19.   (New) The information retrieval apparatus according to claim 18, wherein said storing means stores the identification key for specifying said interpolation method, together with said dispersed data.

Claim 20.   (New) The information retrieval apparatus according to claim 18, further comprising rewriting means for rewriting the general user selection taste data of said storing means onto another storing means.

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